



U.S. Department of Justice

Ronald C. Machen Jr.
*United States Attorney for the
District of Columbia*

*Judiciary Center
555 Fourth St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

PRESS RELEASE

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For Information Contact:

Public Affairs

(202) 514-6933

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Maryland Man Convicted in 1999 Double Homicide - Man and Woman Were Fatally Shot While Seated in a Car -

WASHINGTON: Deandre Williams, 33, was convicted this week of first degree felony murder while armed and related charges in the 1999 slayings of a man and a woman who were shot while in a car in Northwest Washington, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. and Cathy L. Lanier, chief of the Metropolitan Police Department, announced today.

A jury returned the guilty verdicts Thursday after a trial in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. Williams, who was convicted of 10 counts, is scheduled to be sentenced by the Honorable Michael L. Rankin on February 4, 2011.

According to evidence presented at trial, at 10:50 p.m. on August 12, 1999, in the 1300 block of Hamilton Street NW, Williams approached a parked vehicle in which Duane Hicks and Passion McDowney were seated. Williams, while leaning with one hand on the vehicle and without warning, pulled out a revolver and opened fire on both victims. He then retrieved an unknown package from the vehicle and escaped. Hicks, 21, was pronounced dead within an hour of the shootings. McDowney, 24, died about 17 hours later.

Although a witness observed the events, the witness was unable to identify the shooter. However, evidence technicians lifted a palm print from the roof of the parked vehicle – directly over the right front passenger window through which the gunshots had been fired. A fingerprint identification specialist compared the palm print lifted from the roof of the vehicle to that of the defendant and concluded that the lifted print was from Williams's left hand.

Two days after the shootings, Williams was pursued by police following the report of an unrelated crime. During the chase, an officer noticed a silver-colored revolver fall from the defendant's waistband area. A firearms and tool-mark examiner compared the bullets recovered during the autopsies of the two victims to bullets fired from the defendant's revolver during a test-fire. The markings were insufficient to determine whether the defendant's pistol was actually

the murder weapon, but the examiner determined that the revolver could not be excluded as the gun used in the shootings.

Williams was charged with the murders in 2001 and has been incarcerated ever since, serving a sentence on an unrelated robbery.

Williams's conviction marks the U.S. Attorney's Office's third successful prosecution since June of an older homicide case. In one case, a man was convicted of a 20-year-old murder. In the other, a man was convicted of an 11-year-old murder of a woman whose body was never found. The U.S. Attorney's Office is committed to investigating these older homicides and recently created a special unit within its homicide section to look into long-unsolved or "cold" cases.

"If you commit these crimes, no matter how much time passes by, the message is clear: we're going to keep fighting for justice," said U.S. Attorney Machen. "Even if you think you've gotten away, you haven't."

"As time passes, the victims' families never forget the loved ones that they have lost – nor do we," said Police Chief Lanier.

In announcing the verdicts, United States Attorney Machen and Chief Lanier praised the work of MPD Criminal Investigation Division Detectives Daniel Whalen and Carlos Hilliard; Sgt. Joseph Bonner and Detective Collis Timlick, of the Fourth Police District; Sixth District Officer Larry Martin; Mobile Crime Lab technicians Cynthia Brown, Anthony Lozado, Natasha Pettus, Dwayne Mitchell, David Murray and Nathaniel Covington; fingerprint identification specialist Diane Glover, and firearms and tool-mark examiner Lyndon Watkins.

U.S. Attorney Machen and Chief Lanier also praised paralegal Alesha Matthews Yette, Victim/Witness Assistance Advocate Marcy Rinker, Litigation Technology Unit specialists Kimberly Smith, Leif Hickling and Joshua Ellen, for their assistance during the prosecution of this case. Finally, they commended Assistant United States Attorneys Robert Little and John Cummings who investigated and indicted the case, and Gary Wheeler, who handled the trial.